

Message Text

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FOR FERNANDEZ FROM CLAUSSEN

E.O. 11652: N/A
SUBJECT: "ATLANTIC NEWS" REPORT ON MBFR

1. FOLLOWING TEXT APPEARED IN "ATLANTIC NEWS" DATED
19 APRIL 1978. BEGIN TEXT:

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1. (A.N.-N.A.) - AT THE LAST PLENARY SESSION IN THE
PRESENT ROUND OF NEGOTIATIONS IN VIENNA ON A REDUCTION
OF FORCES IN CENTRAL EUROPE (MBFR), WHICH IS TO TAKE PLACE
THIS WEDNESDAY 19 APRIL, THE TWELVE NATO DELEGATIONS WILL
SUBMIT A "NEW INITIATIVE" TO THE WARSAW PACT COUNTRIES
TO RELAUNCH THE NEGOTIATIONS TOWARDS A FIRST PHASE AGREE-
MENT. ACCORDING TO WESTERN DIPLOMATS, THE NEW NATO
PROPOSAL OFFERS "SIGNIFICANT CONCESSIONS" TO THE PACT
COUNTRIES, PROVIDED THE LATTER ACCEPT THE PRINCIPLE OF
"APPROXIMATE PARITY OF THE NUMBERS" OF THE FORCES OF THE
TWO MILITARY ALLIANCES IN THE MBFR REDUCTIONS ZONE IN
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CENTRAL EUROPE (I.E. THE TERRITORY OF THE FRG, THE BENELUX,
THE GDR, POLAND AND CZECHOSLOVAKIA).

2. THE COMPROMISE OFFER WAS ALREADY DISCUSSED IN PRIVATE
LAST WEEK WITH EAST EUROPEAN DIPLOMATS, BUT THERE HAS
AS YET BEEN NO FAVOURABLE OR UNFAVOURABLE REACTION.
INDEED, THE WEST WAS EXPECTING THIS, SINCE EXPERIENCE

HAS ALREADY SHOWN THAT THE EAST EUROPEAN COUNTRIES, AND NOTABLY THE SOVIETS, TAKE AN ENORMOUS AMOUNT OF TIME TO REACT OFFICIALLY TO A NEW MOVE IN THE DISARMAMENT NEGOTIATIONS. THAT IS WHY THE WESTERN COUNTRIES NORMALLY WAIT UNTIL THE END OF A ROUND OF NEGOTIATIONS BEFORE SUBMITTING NEW INITIATIVES, IN ORDER TO GIVE THE OTHER SIDE TIME TO STUDY THEM IN THEIR CAPITALS. CONSEQUENTLY, IT WILL ONLY BE FROM 18 MAY NEXT, WHEN THE 15TH ROUND OF THE MBFR NEGOTIATIONS BEGINS, THAT WE SHALL HAVE SOME IDEA OF THE EAST'S REACTION.

3. THE NEW NATO INITIATIVE, WHICH HAD BEEN PUT ON ICE AT THE END OF LAST YEAR UNTIL PROGRESS WAS MADE ON THE DATA DISCUSSION, IS MAINLY BASED ON THE IDEA PUT FORWARD BY WEST GERMAN CHANCELLOR, HELMUT SCHMIDT. IN ORDER TO FACILITATE ACCEPTANCE BY THE EAST OF THE LAST NATO NUCLEAR PROPOSAL (THE SO-CALLED "OPTION-3" OF DECEMBER 1975), MR. SCHMIDT HAD WANTED TO MAKE A FEW CONCESSIONS TO THE EAST. THESE CONCESSIONS HAD BEEN FINALISED BY NATO AND THE NEW ALLIANCE INITIATIVE WOULD INVOLVE THE FOLLOWING FOUR CONCESSIONS:

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(1) ACCEPTANCE OF THE "EQUAL REDUCTIONS" PRINCIPLE, ONCE THE PARITY OF NUMBERS HAS BEEN ACHIEVED. IN VIEW OF THE NUMERICAL SUPERIORITY OF THE WARSAW PACT GROUND FORCES - UNCLASSIFIED

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157,000 MEN -, IN THE PAST NATO HAD INSISTED ON THE TWO ALLIANCES EFFECTING ASYMMETRICAL REDUCTIONS IN ORDER TO EVENTUALLY REACH A COMMON AND COLLECTIVE CEILING ON EACH SIDE OF CENTRAL EUROPE OF 700,000 MEN (GROUND FORCES). THE EAST HAD ALWAYS INSISTED THAT THERE WAS ALREADY AN APPROXIMATE PARITY BETWEEN THE FORCES OF THE TWO CAMPS AND CONSEQUENTLY ADVOCATED SYMMETRICAL REDUCTIONS. WE WOULD POINT OUT THAT SYMMETRICAL REDUCTIONS EFFECTED ON TWO DIFFERENT FORCE LEVELS WOULD ONLY ENHANCE THE EAST'S RELATIVE SUPERIORITY IN CENTRAL EUROPE.

(2) PRIOR UNDERTAKING (IN A FIRST-PHASE AGREEMENT) BY ALL "DIRECT PARTICIPANTS" TO MAKE CUTS IN A SECOND PHASE AGREEMENT. IN OTHER WORDS, THE SIX NATO COUNTRIES (BELGIUM, NETHERLANDS, LUXEMBOURG, CANADA, FEDERAL GERMANY AND GREAT BRITAIN) WILL SPECIFICALLY UNDERTAKE IN THE FIRST PHASE OF AN MBFR AGREEMENT, TO REDUCE THEIR FORCES AT THE SAME TIME AS THREE PACT COUNTRIES (CZECHOSLOVAKIA, EAST GERMANY AND POLAND) IN A SECOND PHASE WHICH WOULD FOLLOW THE CUTS IN NUMBERS MADE SOLELY BY THE UNITED STATES AND THE SOVIET UNION IN THE FIRST PHASE. THIS DIRECT LINK BETWEEN THE TWO PHASES OF A GLOBAL

MBFR AGREEMENT HAD BEEN DEMANDED FOR A LONG TIME BY THE EAST, WHICH FEARS THAT ONCE AN INITIAL AGREEMENT IS CONCLUDED (WITH AN UNEQUAL WITHDRAWAL OF AMERICAN AND SOVIET FORCES), THE SECOND PART OF THE AGREEMENT WILL NEVER BE CONCLUDED.

(3) PROPOSAL TO ENABLE THE USSR TO WITHDRAW ONLY FIVE TANK DIVISIONS - 68,000 MEN AND 1,700 TANKS - FROM THE GDR, CZECHOSLOVAKIA OR POLAND, IN THE FIRST PHASE, WHILE THE WESTERN COUNTRIES' ORIGINAL PROPOSALS WERE FOR THE WITHDRAWAL OF ONE SPECIFIC SOVIET TANK ARMY FROM

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EAST GERMANY. THIS WAS SEEN AS A PARTICULARLY THREATENING ARMY CORPS BY THE FRG. THIS CONCESSION WOULD ENABLE THE USSR TO CHOOSE WHAT DIVISIONS IT WOULD WITHDRAW, AND NOTABLY TO BE ABLE TO WITHDRAW THE OLDER "T-62" TANKS RATHER THAN THE MODERN "T-72"'S STATIONED IN THE GDR.

- THIS SOVIET WITHDRAWAL WOULD BE IN EXCHANGE FOR THE U.S. WITHDRAWAL OF A THOUSAND TACTICAL NUCLEAR WARHEADS ACCOMPANIED BY THEIR LAUNCHING SYSTEMS, NAMELY 54 F-4 PLANES WITH A NUCLEAR CAPABILITY AND 36 "PERSHING" MEDIUM-RANGE MISSILES, AND 29,000 MEMBERS OF THE AMERICAN GROUND FORCES.

(4) ACCEPTANCE OF THE DEMAND BY EAST EUROPEAN COUNTRIES THAT COMPLETE UNITS BE INCLUDED IN THE ORIGINAL WITHDRAWAL OF 29,000 MEMBERS OF THE AMERICAN FORCES, SCHEDULED

FOR THE FIRST PHASE. THE WARSAW PACT HAD CLAIMED THAT IT WAS NOT FAIR TO ASK THE SOVIET UNION TO WITHDRAW ENTIRE DIVISIONS WITHOUT A COMPARABLE AMERICAN WITHDRAWAL ON THE BASIS OF UNITS. IN THE REVISED PLAN, TWO-THIRDS OF AMERICANS WITHDRAWN WOULD BE WITHDRAWN IN ENTIRE

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UNITS, WHICH WOULD BE DESIGNATED IN ADVANCE. OBVIOUSLY THIS MEANS THAT TWO-THIRDS OF THE AMERICANS TO BE WITHDRAWN WILL BE WITHDRAWN FROM THE FRG.

4. ACCORDING TO INFORMED NATO SOURCES, THE REASON FOR THE SUBMISSION OF THE NEW NATO INITIATIVE AT THIS PRECISE MOMENT IS TWOFOLD. PRIMO, THE ALLIANCE, WHICH KNOWS THAT THE MBFR HAVE BEEN DRAGGING FOR SOME TIME, AND WHICH IS AWARE OF THE FRG'S DESIRE FOR PROGRESS IN MILITARY DETENTE IN CENTRAL EUROPE, WANTED TO DO EVERYTHING IN ITS POWER TO REACH AN INITIAL AGREEMENT INCLUDING THE PRINCIPLE OF "PARITY" BETWEEN THE TWO ALLIANCES IN TERMS OF MEN AND ARMoured VEHICLES (IN ADDITION TO ITS SUPERIORITY IN MEN IN CENTRAL EUROPE, THE PACT HAS A TANK SUPERIORITY OF ABOUT 2.7 TO 1 AT PRESENT). WE WOULD POINT OUT THAT THERE IS ALREADY APPROXIMATE PARITY AS REGARDS THE OPERATIONAL CAPABILITY OF TACTICAL NUCLEAR POSTURES ON BOTH SIDES IN CENTRAL EUROPE. BY MEANS OF THIS INITIATIVE AS WELL AS DATA DISCUSSIONS, IT IS THROUGH IN INFORMED CIRCLES THAT IS NOW POSSIBLE TO REACH A FIRST-PHASE AGREEMENT IF THERE ARE NO POLITICAL PROBLEMS.

5. SECUNDO, THE WEST HAD WANTED TO HAVE A DETAILED DATA DISCUSSION IN ORDER TO DETERMINE WHY THERE IS A CONSIDERABLE DISPARITY BETWEEN THE EAST'S OFFICIAL FIGURES ON PACT FORCES IN CENTRAL EUROPE AND NATO ESTIMATES CONCERNING THESE SAME FORCES, WHICH IS THE CASE. HOWEVER, AND DESPITE THE RESULTS OF THIS DISCUSSION, THE WEST FOUND ITSELF SOMEWHAT LOCKED INTO A DATA DISCUSSION, A DISCUSSION WHICH IS LIKELY TO BECOME INCREASINGLY COMPLICATED. CONSEQUENTLY, NATO HAS DECIDED TO SUBMIT THE NEW INITIATIVE IN ORDER TO BREAK THIS VICIOUS CIRCLE TO

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SOME EXTENT.

6. HAVING SAID THIS, ONE MUST NOT UNDER-ESTIMATE THE RESULTS OF THE DATA DISCUSSION, OR SUPPOSE THAT THIS DISCUSSION HAS COME TO AN END.

7. THE PRE-CONDITION LAID DOWN BY NATO FOR THE SUBMISSION OF ITS NEW INITIATIVE WAS "A GENUINE DATA DISCUSSION". THIS TOOK PLACE SINCE NATO AND THE WARSAW PACT EXCHANGED NOT ONLY MORE DETAILED FIGURES ON THEIR GROUND FORCES (SEE A.N. OF 22 MARCH) BUT LATER ALSO MORE DETAILED FIGURES ON THEIR AIR FORCES.

8. THESE ADDITIONAL DETAILS ON PACT FORCES ENABLED NATO TO IDENTIFY IN CERTAIN EAST EUROPEAN COUNTRIES THE REASONS FOR THE DISPARITIES BETWEEN BOTH SIDES' ESTIMATES. HOWEVER, IT IS POINTED OUT IN NATO, IT WOULD BE NECESSARY TO AGAIN HAVE MORE PRECISE DETAILS CONCERNING PACT FORCES BEFORE ONCE AND FOR ALL CLARIFYING THE REAL LEVELS OF MILITARY FORCES IN CENTRAL EUROPE. CONSEQUENTLY THE DATA DISCUSSION WILL CONTINUE IN VIENNA (FOR ADDITIONAL DETAILS ON THE MBFR SINCE THEY BEGAN, SEE A.N. OF 27 JANUARY 1978). CLAUSSEN

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